

DOING THE *do.town* RAMBLE
PROMOTING PREVENTION, PROTECTION AND RENEWAL

By Mayor Gene Winstead

Bloomington’s success is the result of decades of City leadership taking the long view in promoting continuous, cost-effective, quality community improvements. Examples include developments such as the Mall of America, maintenance and renewal of City facilities and infrastructure, including the Pavement Management Program, as well as more than \$75 million in facilities upgrades and equipment replacements.

More recent examples have focused community renewal in areas where demand for the original land uses has ebbed. Fortunately, this coincides with growing interest in creating higher density, mixed-use, transit-oriented developments, which the City does, while also providing protection for established single-family residential areas.

The City’s *Alternative Transportation Plan* makes the connection between all areas of the community, mass transit options and opportunities for recreation while at the same time implementing longer-term traffic-calming efforts that enhance

street safety. Updating the City’s Vision in *Imagine Bloomington 2025*, the City’s strategic plan for development, redevelopment, infrastructure, and fiscal strength and stability for the next 20 years, helped to unite our efforts strategically and make us an even more sustainable community.

One of the Vision’s attributes supports actions that promote physical well-being. The recently announced initiative with Bloomington, Richfield, Edina and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota, “*do.town*,” has a similar vision: ***Communities where people live longer, healthier lives.*** Its mission: ***To create sustainable choices that support better health for all.***

The City can help achieve the *do.town* vision and mission through policies, systems and environmental changes that provide greater opportunities for physical fitness and encourage more healthy choices that may also reduce your daily amount of stress. While a City initiative, we serve more as catalyst than provider by promoting active lifestyles and better nutrition, creating more walkable, bikeable neighborhoods and further developing areas such as the South Loop, Penn-American and Normandale Lake districts that are less auto-dependent – connecting them to residential and recreational areas across the community.

The *do.town* initiative also invites employers to encourage better nutrition and physical activity among their employees. An initial group of 17 business owners from each of the three communities will participate in a *do.town* employer pilot to help develop models for others to follow. Such efforts may not only help lower longer-term health costs, but also boost employee morale and productivity.

Our bodies often seem to crave four food groups: sugar, salt, fat and chocolate. This is probably a holdover from a few generations ago when most



people labored for hours outdoors. These diets were essential to “fuel the furnace” for such arduously physical lives.

Today, these types of foods are craved more for comfort than nutrition. To move both body and mind to desire healthier alternatives may require continuing to expand improved nutritional opportunities such as the very successful Bloomington Farmers Market, now completing its fifth season. The Farmers Market offers a variety of fresh fruits, vegetables, breads, nuts and more. There will be one more opportunity to attend the Farmers Market this year on **Saturday, December 10, from 9 a.m. - noon**, at Civic Plaza, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road.

So “treat” yourself. Eat better. Exercise more. You’ll feel healthier in the shorter term with a better quality of life in the longer term. Engage in continuous, personal, quality improvements through prevention, protection and renewal. It will help you be in stride with the ever-growing number of people in Bloomington who are making the transformation to be more sustainable. In doing so, you will personally set an example for family and friends to follow and renew themselves.

December is a good month to get a “jump” start on the traditional New Year’s Eve resolution to get in better shape. Be as active as you can – pushing away from TV and table and moving toward a brighter future. Live longer, healthier lives thanks to *do.town*.



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Upon request, this information can be available in Braille, large print, audio tape and/or electronic format.



A LEGACY OF QUALITY STAFFING AND SERVICE
HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR KENT MICHAELSON RETIRES

Human Resources Director Kent Michaelson retired at the end of October after more than 35 years with the City, 33 of which he spent as Human Resources Director.

Initially hired as an assistant to the City Manager, when Michaelson was appointed Director of Human Resources at age 30, he was the youngest person in the City organization to lead a department.

“The quality and productivity of City services are directly attributable to Kent’s many efforts to align benefits across the organization, select the best

employees and train them in areas such as customer service that have paid great dividends with those we serve,” City Manager Mark Bernhardson said.

Over the course of his career, Michaelson estimates he has hired more than 1,500 employees – or enough people to replace the entire City staff three times over.

The average length of service for a City employee is 14 years, which, Michaelson said, speaks to the quality of the organization. He credits the City’s strong leadership, staff and work environment for the low turn-over.



“One of the best legacies we in Human Resources can leave behind is a high quality staff,” Michaelson said.

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